DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 112 SO 024 485

AUTHOR	Parrish-Major, Joan
TITLE	Ancient Ghana: Pre-Colonial Trading Empire. A Unit of Study for Grades 5-8.
INSTITUTION	National Center for History in the Schools, Los Angeles, CA.
SPONS AGENCY	National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	33p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Center for History in the Schools, 10880 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 761, Los Angeles, CA 90024-4108.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*African History; Foreign Countries; Grade 5; Grade 6; Grade 7; Grade 8; *History Instruction; Intermediate Grades; *International Trade; Junior High Schools; Middle Schools; Primary Sources; Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS	*Africa (Sub Sahara); *Ghana

ABSTRACT

This unit is one of a series that presents specific moments in history from which students focus on the meanings of landmark events. To explore the African past it is necessary to examine African civilization before colonization and to expose students to the richness that this past reflects. This unit provides students with a taste of the African past, as it explores the ancient kingdom of Ghana, a thriving center of trade in the Western Sudan, boasting advanced technology and a sophisticated social and political organization. The unit covers the first millennium A.D. and could follow the study of ancient civilizations or be integrated with a study on the early Middle Ages and/or the rise of Islam. It forms the foundation for the study of European imperialism in Africa by providing students with an understanding of the internal dynamics within an African kingdom before the intrusion of European imperialism and colonialism. It also informs students about the regional trade that later became a major European attraction. Consequently, there was a prolonged competition between traders of the various European nations to control the African trade leading to the colonization of Africa. The unit gives students an opportunity to appreciate the vast and diverse geographic conditions of Africa, to understand the dynamics of trade within Africa during the first millennium, and to appreciate the technological, organizational, and material advances of the ancient kingdom of Ghana. The unit can be used for exploring the lingering debate whether Sub-Saharan Africa experienced feudalism and monarchical rule as did Europe. Contains five references. (Author/DK)

ED 376 112

ANCIENT GHANA: PRE-COLONIAL TRADING EMPIRE

A UNIT OF STUDY FOR GRADES 5 - 8

By Joan Parrish-Major
Teacher Associate, NCHS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
LINDA
Symcox
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Stone circles of Sinè-Saloun Mauritania, Senegal. Courtesy of Merrick Posnansky. One of thousands of similar burial sites in the region.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
A Cooperative Research Program of the
University of California, Los Angeles
and the National Endowment for the Humanities

Linda Symcox, Project Developer & Series Editor
Reuben Mekenye, Unit Editor
Scott Waugh, Institute Director
Charlotte Crabtree, Director

SO 024 485

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

© 1992, The Regents, University of California

Permission is hereby granted to reproduce and distribute this publication for educational and research purposes, except for the limitations set forth in the paragraphs below.

This publication also contains certain materials separately copyrighted by others. All rights in those materials are reserved by those copyright co-owners, and any reproduction of their materials is governed by the Copyright Act of 1976.

Any reproduction of this publication for commercial use is prohibited.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to the contributions of author Joan Parrish, Institute Director, Scott Waugh; Unit Editor, Reuben Mekenye; and Project Director, Linda Symcox; the Center also acknowledges the important contributions of the following to this teaching unit: contributions of Margaret McMillen for photo research and copy-editing; Carole Collier Frick for mapwork; Leticia Zermeno for copyright-research activities; Alexey Root for proofreading; and Pamela Hamilton for assistance in inputting and desktop publishing. Special appreciation is due to Brenda Thomas who created the desktop layouts and unit designs, and brought the publication to final completion.

We gratefully recognize Corrine A. Seeds Elementary School, UCLA for supporting Teacher Associate Joan Parrish's participation in the Center's 1988-89 U. S. History Institutes in which this unit was developed. Recognition is also given to all the Teacher Associates of this Institute who reviewed, offered professional guidance, and assisted in field testing of the unit.

Finally, we acknowledge the continuing contributions of the National Endowment for the Humanities which established the National Center for History in the Schools in March 1988 and has generously supported this activity.

For information on additional teaching units and other resources from the Center, please write:

National Center for History in the Schools
University of California, Los Angeles
Moore Hall 231, 405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1521

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

By Linda Symcox

The National Center for History in the Schools has developed the following collection of lessons for teaching **Ancient Ghana**. Our units are the fruit of a year-long collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. They represent specific "**dramatic moments**" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

In our approach, the continuing narrative provides the context in which the dramatic moment is situated. By studying a crucial turning-point in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our dramatic moments are based on **primary sources**, taken from documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers and literature from the period under study. As you know, a primary source is a **first-hand** account of any event in history. For example, the telecast or the script of a speech would be a primary source. A secondary source is a **second-hand** account of an event. This would be, for example, the newspaper account of the speech the next day or a newscaster's report about the speech. All historical accounts, such as textbooks, are by their very

nature secondary sources. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to re-create for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: 1) **Teacher Background Materials** and 2) **Lesson Plans** with **Student Resources**. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. We have chosen to pitch the various lessons on different grade levels and they can usually be adapted to a slightly higher or lower level.

The **Teacher Background** section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific **Dramatic Moment** to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The **Lesson Plans** include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or

cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. These resources consist of primary source documents, any handouts or student background materials, and in many cases, a bibliography for the unit.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction, rather than rote memorization.

THE ROYAL PALACE OF THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF GHANA

One of the earliest empires of the Western Sudan was the ancient kingdom of Ghana. Historians believe that it existed as early as 400 A. D. The empire was called **Awkar**. The word **Ghana** was a title which meant "war chief" and was used by the king. By 800 A. D., this kingdom was a large trading center and by 1070 it had become one of the most powerful empires in the world. We know about this ancient empire from the writings of Arab geographers. Read this description by one traveler of his vision upon entering the palace court:

> ***It was "adorned with sculptures, paintings and glass windows. None of the 1000 horses slept except upon a carpet, nor was he tied except by a silken rope round his neck and to his foot ... each horse had three persons attached to his service and seated near him. One took charge of his food, the second of his drink, and the third took charge of his urine and droppings, the king enthroned on a seat of red gold surrounded by numerous flaming torches, watched 10,000 of his subjects being served from the royal palace."***
>
> The Chronicle of the Seeker - Mahmud Kati

I. UNIT OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

Western historians have consistently neglected the African past, placing little importance upon pre-colonial African societies. Indeed, teachers of primary through high school students find little, if any, mention of pre-colonial Africa in their curricular guides or textbooks.

There are two reasons for this: first, Western civilization has historically thought of the African as inferior, unworthy of cultural consideration, often denying Africa an indigenous history, assuming its history began with the coming of Europeans to Africa; secondly, most ancient African societies did not develop a system of writing. Western scholars traditionally have relied upon written records as evidence of civilized societies, belittling the historical validity of archeological findings and oral traditions. Yet these findings and oral histories expose a rich and complex African heritage.

The fact remains as historian Basil Davidson has noted, *"To understand the African present it is necessary to understand the African past."* To appreciate the African past it is necessary to examine African civilization before colonization and expose students to the richness which this past reflects. This unit provides students with a taste of that past, as it explores the ancient kingdom of Ghana, a thriving center of trade in the Western Sudan, boasting advanced technology and a sophisticated social and political organization.

This unit will also be useful regarding the lingering debate whether Sub-Saharan Africa experienced feudalism and/or monarchical rule as did Europe. Some historians such as Jack Goody, although recognizing various similarities between feudal Europe and the early African kingdoms and states, have rejected the notion that feu-

dalism existed in Africa. Basing his argument on the specific technological, military, material and political developments in medieval Europe and Africa, Goody has sought either to justify the inferiority of the African civilization, or to romanticize its achievements. It is the correction of this distorted view of Africa which makes this unit both crucial and urgent. One approach to the teaching of this topic would thus need to involve comparisons between medieval Europe and ancient Ghana. It should be done in such a way that an appreciation of the similarities and differences of the two polities (irrespective of the time differences) is not lost.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

The unit is written for middle school students. The time frame covers the first millennium A.D. and could follow the study of Ancient Civilizations or be integrated with a study on the early Middle Ages and/or the rise of Islam. The unit could also be used as a separate culture study.

Further, it forms the foundation for the study of European imperialism in Africa. It does so by providing students with an understanding of the internal dynamics within an African kingdom before the intrusion of European imperialism and colonialism. It also informs us about the regional trade which later became a major European attraction. Consequently, there was a prolonged competition between traders of the various European nations to control the African trade leading to the colonization of Africa.

III. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. To appreciate the vast and diverse geographic conditions of Africa.

2. To understand the dynamics of trade within Africa during the first millennium.

3. To appreciate the technological, organizational and material advances of the ancient kingdom of Ghana.

IV. INTRODUCTION TO ANCIENT GHANA: PRE-COLONIAL TRADING EMPIRE

Much of the history of Africa comes from the Western Sudan—the grassland plains that lie around the upper waters of the Niger and Senegal Rivers. Within this area, for more than 1000 years, a series of powerful empires developed as large and as wealthy as many empires in the ancient and medieval West. This period is often called the Golden Age of West Africa.

Taken as a whole, the Sudan runs all the way from the valley of the Nile to the shores of the Atlantic in modern Senegal and Mauritania. Geographers have roughly divided the Sudan into two halves: the Eastern Sudan, from the Nile River to about Lake Chad and the Western Sudan, from Lake Chad to the Atlantic.

Consisting mainly of grasslands, or savannas, the Western Sudan marks the southernmost border of the Sahara Desert. Despite the desert, the people living there have a long tradition of trading with the Arabs of North Africa. As early as 400 B. C., Arab traders made the arduous journey across the desert to exchange their salt and cloth for gold and ivory. Early trade was often unprofitable because horses and donkeys that carried the goods were ill-suited for desert travel. Around the year 100 A. D., the camel was imported from Asia. Having broad feet that did not sink into the sand and the ability to store water, the camel could endure the long journeys between oases. With the formation of long caravans, trade became more profitable and by the late 7th century, the trade began to flourish.

The three main sources of knowledge about the African past—archeology, oral history, and written sources by North Africans speak often about the trading empire of

Ancient Ghana. Some historical specifics related by the North African traders regarding the people at that time may still be in question, though the deep respect revealed in these historical documents towards this empire cannot be in doubt or undervalued.

It is estimated that Ghana existed as early as 400 A. D. By 800 A. D. it was a thriving trading center and by 1070 it was one of the most powerful empires in the world.

The trade in salt and gold formed the basis of Ghana's empire. Ghana never owned any salt or gold fields; the gold came from an area south of Ghana called Wangara, which scholars place near the Senegal River. The salt came from the Sahara Desert and North Africa. The ability of ancient Ghana to develop into a wealthy and powerful empire reflects its achievements in foreign policy, social organization and use of military power. For Ghana did not control the source of trade; it controlled the process of trade.

Scholars point to several factors leading to this power and control: first, Ghana had superior technology. It had developed the art of iron work which was unsurpassed in Western societies. According to Al Bakri, the Arab geographer, *"When the king of Ghana calls up this army, he can put 200,000 men in the field."* The men were armed with finely crafted iron spears. Secondly, it had developed an efficient and effective social and political organization. At the top was the king, under him were subordinate kings and governors who ruled the empire. They paid allegiance to the king and in return they received protection and the right to rule their local areas. Such military and social organization enabled the empire to provide services for the traders. As all trade passed through Ghana, safe passage was a primary need. Ghana's large army could maintain the peace and assure safety for the

traders. In return for providing safe passage, Ghana made certain demands. First, it restricted the trade of gold to gold dust, declaring that all nuggets found in the land belonged to the king. This restriction assured the high value of gold. In essence, the empire stabilized the trade by holding a monopoly on it.

Secondly, and another example of Ghana's excellent organization, was its tax system. These taxes would today be referred to as import/export taxes. They consisted of sums of money (or more probably their equal in goods) which traders had to pay for the right to brings goods into Ghana, or to take other goods out of Ghana. The King of Ghana, wrote Al Bakri *"places a tax of one dinar of gold on each donkey-load of salt that comes into his country...(and) a tax of two dinars of gold on each loan of salt that goes out."* Similar taxes were applied to loads of copper and other goods.

A third factor, closely related to social organization was that Ghana had strong and wise leadership. The king, though having a council of advisors, made all-important decisions. He also, it appears, exerted his power and influence to ensure justice throughout the empire by personally holding court to judge cases. He also developed a diplomatic foreign policy, inviting Muslim traders from the north to live in Ghana. As long as the Muslims paid their taxes, they were welcome in Ghana. Though tolerant of the Arab's Muslim religion, the king of Ghana himself and most of his people followed their own traditional African religion and customs, another factor contributing to Ghana's strength and stability.

This evidence should invalidate the widely held notions that ancient Africa was unsophisticated and devoid of history. It demonstrates that Africa had well-organized states and kingdoms with fairly developed diplomatic

systems limited only by the modern means of communication. At the center of these highly organized states were kings and leading chiefs who have been described variously as despots, benevolent monarchs, or even democratic rulers. The significant thing is that assisted by other ranking members of the royal blood, military leaders and personal appointees, the African kings made the important decisions regarding their kingdoms and states. Naturally, they controlled the wealth of their states and decided how it was shared. The king rewarded his subordinates according to the loyalty they accorded him. Specific characteristics of organization, material wealth and technology at the disposal of the military aside, the African kingdoms and states experienced a way of life that is now commonly known as feudalism. Kings raised wealth through taxation, control of trade, land allocation and exaction of tribute.

LESSON ONE

THE GEOGRAPHY OF AFRICA

A. Objectives

1. To locate Africa on a world map, identify bordering continents, Middle Eastern countries, major bordering water formations and the Equator.

2. To identify three main climates and vegetation regions in Africa.

3. To locate major rivers, lakes, and mountains in Africa.

4. To appreciate the **size** of Africa.

B. Lesson Activities (Three Class Periods)

1. Have students locate Africa, surrounding continents and waterways, neighboring Arab countries, and the Equator on the classroom wall map.

2. Discuss the climate as you might expect it in those areas.

3. On a blank regional map (**MAP I**), have students fill in and label the geographical locations identified in Activity #1.

4. Distribute the African Land and Climate map. (See **MAP II**.) Discuss the three main types of climate and plant life: Desert, Tropical Forests, and Savanna grasslands. Note main rivers, mountain ranges, plateaus, and deserts. Note that the Equator runs through changing altitudes, affecting climate and plant life.

5. Discuss geographical dynamics of the area. Be sure

students understand climate and plant life especially as they relate to agriculture, natural resources, and transportation.

C. Extended Activities

1. On a blank map of Africa (See **MAP III**), have students label and color code the three types of climate/plant life, label all water areas and mountains, and label the Equator. Creating a series of overlapping acetate maps is particularly effective (one map outlining the shape of the continent, the next map noting the climate/plant areas and the Equator, another overlay showing the rivers and mountains. Such maps reinforce the relationship of parts to whole in geography.)

2. Create three dimensional relief maps of Africa using water, salt, and flour mixtures. Maps should be color-coded (with water color or tempera paint) to identify land types, formations, and main water ways.

D. Evaluation Activities

Have individual students or students groups report about one aspect of African geography—i.e. climate diversity, land formations, major rivers. They should refer to individual or group maps as they report to the rest of the class.

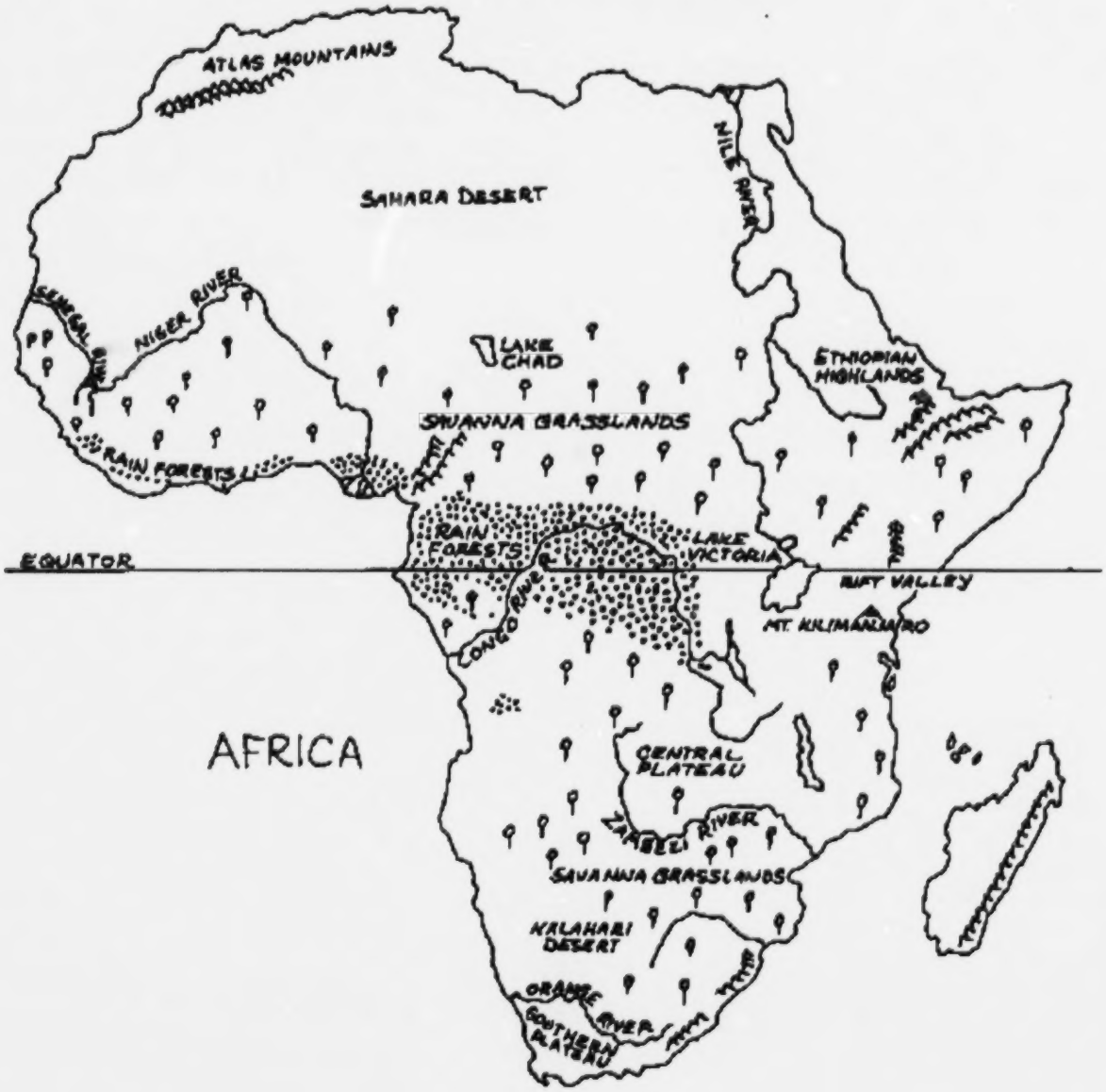
STUDENT RESOURCE: MAP I

MAP OF EUROPE, ASIA AND AFRICA

Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

STUDENT RESOURCE: MAP II

AFRICA: LAND AND CLIMATE



Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

STUDENT RESOURCE: MAP III

BLANK MAP OF AFRICA

Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

THE ROYAL PALACE OF THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF GHANA

A. Objectives

1. To identify when and where the kingdom of Ghana existed.

2. To examine the **DRAMATIC MOMENT.**

3. To speculate on life in ancient Ghana—economics, government.

4. To understand the historical connection between Africa's past and present.

B. Lesson Activities (Two Class Periods)

1. Have students identify the western half of Africa; then identify the area known as the western Sudan. Have students identify from their previous map work the type of land to the north and south of the Sudan.

2. Show students the area believed to be that of ancient Ghana (See **MAP II,** in **LESSON ONE**). Students should identify that area on their self-made maps—label or draw an icon on the area.

3. Have students read the **DRAMATIC MOMENT.**

4. Discuss the description. Sample questions:

   a. What do we know of the kingdom from this description?

   b. What might be the economic level of the people?

c. What does the description of the horses and their care tell you about the kingdom?

d. From what you know about the area's geographic location, can you guess how the kings might have acquired their wealth?

5. Have the students paint or draw a picture of what they envision the palace to be like. (You may want to incorporate this picture into a culmination mural which includes information learned in this lesson and **LESSONS THREE** through **FIVE**).

6. Share **DOCUMENT A**, Kwame Nkrumuah's comments on Ghana, with the class. Have the students discuss the modern leader's justification for using the ancient name of "Ghana" for a modern state. Students should be encouraged to discuss issues of national and cultural pride. Students can record their observation in their double-entry journals.

Note to the Teacher

Double-entry journals are journal or notebooks in which students describe, list, draw, etc. literal information presented in a book, lecture, picture, i.e. what is told and/or observed. The second entry (usually placed on the opposite page are reflections, appraisals, evaluations, conclusions, generalizations, etc. made about the literal information. (The facts on one side, the opinions and thoughts on the other side.) Double-entry journals are effective in literature, art and history, science—all academic areas.

C. Evaluation Activities

1. Before beginning the next lesson, students should begin a "double-entry journal" reviewing information learned in **LESSONS ONE** and **TWO**. This could be done at first orally in a group, but then individually in a notebook or scrapbook. The student should recount information in note form, paragraph form or graphic drawings. Students should all do their journals after each lesson or at the beginning of a new lesson.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

THE NAMING OF A COUNTRY

The present-day nation of Ghana won its independence in 1957. A year earlier, when Ghana was still called the Gold Coast, Kwame Nkrumah, independence leader and Ghana's first president, made the following comments in a speech to the Gold Coast Assembly.

> ***The government proposes that when the Gold Coast attains independence, the name of the country should be changed from "Gold Coast" to the new name of "Ghana". The name Ghana is rooted deeply in ancient African history, especially in the history of the western portion of Africa known as the western Sudan. It kindles in the imagination of modern African youth the grandeur and the achievements of great medieval civilization which our ancestors developed many centuries before European penetration and subsequent domination of Africa began. According to tradition, the various peoples or tribal groups in the Gold Coast were originally members of the great Ghana empire that developed in the western Sudan during the medieval period.***
>
> ***For the one thousand years that the Ghana empire existed, it spread over a wide expanse of territory in the western Sudan. Its influence stretched across the Sudan from Lake Chad in the east to the Futa Jalon mountains in the west and from the southern fringes of the Sahara Desert in the north to the bights of Benin and Biafra in the south. Thus the Ghana empire carried on extensive commercial relations with the outside world - extending as far as Spain and Portugal. Gold, animal skins, ivory, kolanuts, gums, honey, corn, and cotton were among the articles that writers had most frequently named. It is reported that Egyptian, European, and Asiatic students attended the great and famous universities and other institutions of higher learning that flourished in Ghana during the medieval period to learn philosophy, mathematics, medicine, and law.***
>
> ***It is from this rich historical background that the name Ghana has been proposed as the new name of the gold coast upon the attainment of independence, we take pride in the name, not out of romanticism, but as an inspiration for the future."***

Originally published in *I Speak of Freedom*, by Kwame Nkrumah, New York: Praeger, 1961. Reprinted from *Through African Eyes - Cultures in Change. The African Past and the Coming of the European*. Ed. Leon E. Clark. Praeger Publishers, 1970.

LESSON THREE

WEALTH THROUGH TRADE

A. Objectives

1. To understand the need for and process of **trade** within Ancient Africa.

2. To explore the nature of the "dumb barter" system.

3. To speculate upon methods developed by the Kingdom of Ghana to capitalize on the trade process.

B. Lesson Activities (One Period)

1. Using the sample questions below, initiate a discussion about **trade**. Have children look at map of Africa and surrounding continents. Explain that salt was a product of the Sahara Desert; and that gold was moved in the area south of the Kingdom of Ghana.

   a. Have you ever made a trade with a friend?

   b. Why did you want to trade?

   c. Did you ever think the trade was unfair?

   d. How did you decide how much your possession was worth?

   e. Looking at the map of Africa, why might people need to trade goods?

   f. What natural conditions might make trade difficult in Africa?

   g. From where might the traders come?

2. Explain to the students that the description of "dumb barter" is based upon description left to us by Arab

and European travelers and might contain inaccuracies, but has been passed down as the method of exchange between African and Arab tradesmen.

3. Distribute **DOCUMENT B**. Divide the class into small groups to read the sequence of events in a dumb barter. Encourage them to role play the sequence.

   a. Questions to facilitate discussion:

      - Why was this called dumb barter?
      - What are some reasons (pros and cons) for trade without words?
      - Some historians believe that dumb barter was a story made up by foreign travelers. Why might foreign travelers fabricate this story?

4. Inform the students that Ghana's wealth grew out of this trade. Tell them that neither gold nor salt were produced within the kingdom of Ghana. Ask them to speculate upon how the empire managed to benefit from the trading.

C. **Evaluation Activities**

Before beginning **LESSON FOUR,** have students write or draw in their Ancient Ghana double-entry journals (or scrapbook), information recounting the system of dumb barter. A painted scene depicting dumb barter could be added to an ongoing mural. (Some teachers might prefer to wait until the end of the unit to begin a mural when the students have more information for planning the location of particular scenes.)

STUDENT RESOURCE : DOCUMENT B

DUMB BARTER

From the north Arab traders arrived in the Kingdom of Ghana and arranged their goods, salt, silk, copper, and metal pots, in marked piles along the banks of the Senegal River. They announced the opening of the market with the beating of drums and then retreated into town to await the arrival of merchants from the south. Traders from Wangara (a region south of Ghana), hearing the drums, sailed up the river with gold. The Wangara traders examined the goods and placed what they felt was an equivalent value of gold by each pile of goods and then retreated to their sailing barks on the river. Arab traders returned to the market. If they were satisfied with the amount of gold left, they sounded the drums again signalling the end of the barter. If they were unsatisfied, they retreated into town and waited for the Wangara traders to return and increase their payment. This process was repeated until both sides were satisfied with the exchange.

ANCIENT GHANA : THE CENTER OF TRADE

A. Objectives

1. To understand the relationship between the Kingdom of Ghana and the traders of North Africa.

2. To learn about the social orgainzation established within the kingdom

3. To know of the tax system employed by the Kingdom upon the trade process within the empire.

4. To appreciate a civilization's use of the above factors for achieving cooperation, wealth, and power.

B. Lesson Activities (Two Periods)

1. Remind the students that Ancient Ghana did not own the gold or salt fields and did not control the mining of gold or salt—these resources came from areas to the North and South of the kingdom. Present to the students the question, *"How did Ghana develop the wealth exhibited in the palace court description by Al-Bakri?"* Have students brainstorm possibilities.

2. If not suggested by the students, tell them that the wealth came from the kingdom's ability to control the trade of goods. Have students suggest ways that a king could achieve this control of trade.

3. As students suggest "a strong military" or "conquest" etc., fill them in on the detail that yes, Ghana did develop a strong military. Share with them that Ghana used its technological expertise to develop iron spears and this clearly gave it an advantage in the field. But suggest that this advantage was used

for other than conquest and military threat. Ask students to suggest functions for a military other than threat and warfare, i.e., How might a strong military aid in the passage of trade? How might it be used as a factor in cooperation?

4. Have students read the original sources from Al-Bakri (See **DOCUMENT C**), and discuss the implications of each. From the readings, have the students describe Ancient Ghana's social organization, foreign policy, and tax system.

5. Have students role play interactions between palace court members and North African traders, using the information gained in the readings.

6. Have students sketch a picture of the two towns and/or the act of traders paying taxes to the representatives of the palace court.

7. Explain that the kingdom of Ghana retained its indigenous lifestyle (architecture, religion, burial ceremonies, myths), rather than take on the lifestyle of the North African Arabs. Encourage students to do further reading on the lifestyles of ancient African kingdoms and report back to the class.

C. Vocabulary

The following words/phrases appear in the unit and may need further exploration by the students. The order presented here follows the order of words as found in the unit:

savanna	justice
desert	foreign policy
trade	climate

monopoly	social organization
tax	cooperation
import tax	wealth
export tax	mining

C. Evaluation Activities

1. Students should enter this new material in their double-entry journals.

2. Students should write a separate journal entry that reflects one day in the life of either an African official in the kingdom or an Arab trader. The entry should correctly reflect information introduced and discussed in this unit. Students should share this journal entry with the class.

3. Students can now begin (or complete) a mural on the ancient kingdom. Scenes to be depicted include: the palace; the two towns; traders passing through the towns; the collection of taxes; a court of justice; the barter process; the Sahara Desert to the north and the Senegal River and the gold mines to the south.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT C

AL-BAKRĪ: ON THE CITY OF GHANA

The city of Ghana consists of two towns in a plain. One of these towns is inhabited by Muslims. It is large with a dozen mosques in one of which they assemble for the Friday prayer....Around the town are wells of sweet water from which they drink and near which they cultivate vegetables.

The royal town, called al-Ghāba ['the grove'] , is six miles away [from the Muslim town], and the area between the two towns is covered with houses. Their houses are made of stone and accacia wood. The king has a palace and conical huts, surrounded by a wall-like enclosure. In the king's town, not far from the royal court of justice, is a mosque where pray the Muslims who come there on missions.

AL-BAKRĪ: ON THE COURT OF JUSTICE IN ANCIENT GHANA

Ghana is the title of the kings of this people... the king who governs them at present is called Tunka Minen; he came to the throne in AH 455 [1067 A.D.] Tunka Minen is the master of a large empire and a formidable power. The king of Ghana can put two hundred thousand warriors in the field. When he gives audience to his people, to listen to their complaints and set them to rights, he sits in a pavilion around which stand ten pages holding shields and gold mounted swords; and on his right hand are the sons of the princes of his empire, splendidly clad and with gold plaited into their hair. The Governor of the city is seated on the ground in front of the king, and all around him are his counselors in the same position. The gate of the chamber is guarded by dogs of an excellent breed, who never leave their place of duty; they wear collars of gold and silver, ornamented with the same metals. The beginning of a royal audience is announced by the beating of a kind of drum which the call deba, made of a long piece of hollowed wood. The people gather when they hear this sound.

AL-BAKRĪ: ON HOW THE KING RAISES MONEY THROUGH TRADE

On every donkey's load of salt the king of Ghana levied one golden dinār when it entered his country and two dinārs when it left. On a load of copper five mithqāls and on a load of other merchandise ten mithqāls ... The king received profits from the gold production by ruling that 'rare nuggets [weighing between an ounce and a rotl, i.e., 1lb] found in the mines of his country were reserved for the king, and only gold dust was left for the people'.

Levtzion, Nehemia. *Ancient Ghana and Mali*. N.Y.: Africana Publishing Company, 1980.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

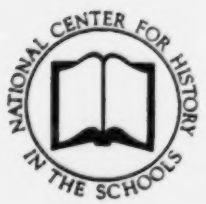
1. Connah, Graham. *African Civilizations: Precolonial Cities and States in Tropical Africa: an archaeological perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

1. Connah, Joseph E. *Africans and Their History*. New American Library, 1987.

3. Levtzion, Nehemia. *Ancient Ghana and Mali*. N.Y.: Africana Publishing, 1973.

4. Davidson, Basil. *A History of West Africa*. Little, Brown, and Company, 1987.

5. Addison, John. *Traditional Africa*. Greenhaven Press, 1980.


NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY
IN THE SCHOOLS